

and treachery. The Bellegardes are now at the mercy of Newman who threatens to divulge the secret to the world. He nourishes the idea of revenge so long as his disturbed moral sense does not regain its balance. But Christopher Newman, a Christopher Columbus of his true American self, soon rediscovers his moral virtue as an American. His moral sense, after performing a 'somersault', regains its balance. He is ashamed of his ever having conceived the idea of hurting even his enemies now in his power. He refrains from damning others, even as Rowland does not refrain from saving others. This difference measures the progress of human types in terms of refinement from Roderick Hudson to *The American*.

Newman is one of 'nature's noblemen' and in his encounter with the 'artificial' French aristocratic noblemen, the prize of being the 'morally most refined' goes to him. At the social level, James says, refinement of manners does not mean an exterior of suave manners without morals. Refined manners are the "outward signs of an inner spiritual grace". High civilisation is that in which manners are tempered and enriched by morals. Newman's noble rejection of revenge and gain reveals his refinement, in which one sees a combination of such rare qualities as magnanimity, charity, kindness and forgiveness. Valentin is right when he remarks that Parts quickens one's wits, and it ends by "teaching one a refinement of observations."^{5*} Newman has come to Paris and learnt a lesson in the refinement of perception. He acquires a knowledge of the omni-present and irremediable evil in human life. He realises that even in the midst of Parisian evil there is virtue in such persons as Valentin and Claire. In them Newman finds aristocratic polish and dignity combined with moral fervour. But like all good people they too are the helpless victims of irremediable evil. Valentin is a Bellegarde and is proud of his family. In fact he loses his life in the observance of one of the much-respected conventions of French aristocratic

life. But
Valentin is aware of the evil and treachery in his
family, and is
ashamed of it. He dies apologising to Newman for the
treacherous
behaviour of his mother and brother.

Claire and Valentin are alike in their hatred of
hypocrisy and in
their opposition to evil and treachery. No wonder that they
hate each
other very much. Claire too feels sorry for the betrayal of
Newman,
whom she likes and respects; yet she is aware of the
irresistible power
of irrational evil in human life, Valentin says of her, "I
have never